



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### ALASKA COMMERCIAL FISHERY REGULATIONS REVISED FOR 1950

Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman today issued changes in the regulations for the protection of the commercial fisheries of Alaska for 1950.

The new regulations are based upon investigation and recommendation of Fish and Wildlife Service personnel, testimony presented at public hearings conducted by the Service at 10 places in Alaska and at Seattle, Washington, and upon written briefs submitted by those interested in the Alaska fishing industry.

#### Bristol Bay Power Boats

Under the new regulations, commencing in 1951, the use of motive power will be permitted in Bristol Bay fishing boats less than 32 feet in length. Advisability of replacing the traditional fleet of gill net sail boats with motor boats has been the subject of controversy for several years. It has been contended on the one hand, that the conservation of the salmon runs would be threatened by such a technological advancement, and on the other that this obsolete method of transportation is made efficient by the current practice of supplying a large number of auxiliary vessels for towing purposes. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service now possesses sufficient enforcement facilities and scientific knowledge to protect the runs against undue depletion despite the type of motive power utilized in the fishing boats. The amended regulation merely permits, and does not require, the use of power; the one-year delay is provided to give everyone equal and ample opportunity to effect the change-over, if desired.

#### Fishing Seasons

In three major areas fishing seasons have been shortened and in two others they have been slightly liberalized. A uniform closure will apply to the entire Kodiak Area from July 15 to 31, with the limited exception of certain recognized red salmon localities. Seasonal opening and closing dates in Kodiak otherwise remain the same as last year. The fishing season in Resurrection Bay Area will open July 1 instead of June 1, as previously. The general Yakutat fishing season will open July 1, although the king salmon fishery in Dry Bay will be permitted to commence on June 1. Seine and trap fishing in Southeastern Alaska is permitted from August 15 to September 3, much the same as last year.

#### Herring Fishery

A new principle is inaugurated this year in the management of the herring quota areas of Kodiak and Resurrection Bay-Prince William Sound. Instead of frequent quota adjustments, based on predictions of availability of supply resulting from analysis of catch data from preceding seasons, these two areas will operate under annual quotas which are stabilized for a three-year period and are largely based on previous average productivity. The Kodiak quota is set at 275,000 barrels of herring

and the Resurrection Bay-Prince William Sound quota is 180,000 for each of the years, 1950, 1951, and 1952. The quota season has also been shortened in each area; the end of the period of Kodiak will be September 30 and at Resurrection Bay-Prince William Sound August 10. Herring may be caught subsequent to these dates without regard to the quota limit because the fall runs are believed distinct and not sufficiently in need of such protection. This situation has been emphasized by the herring operators of the Kodiak Area, and it will be observed closely in the coming season, during which further adjustments can be made if desirable.

The herring fishery of the Southeastern Alaska Area will continue to be managed according to principles previously in use; that is, annual adjustment of quotas based upon developments in the years immediately preceding. A currently prevailing natural scarcity of herring in this area makes it necessary to hold the 1950 quota to the comparatively low limit of 150,000 barrels.

Lesser amendments relating to the herring fishery include removal of the prohibition against use of pounds on herring spawning grounds, although such a restriction continues specifically on the Fish Egg Island grounds, near Craig. The area closed to herring fishing along the western shore of Admiralty Island is extended to include the entire side of the Island between Point Gardner and Point Retreat in order to protect small populations of fish in two bays at the northern end.

Other significant amendments to this year's regulations are listed below according to the regulatory areas in which they are effective:

#### General Regulations of Territory-wide Application

In addition to the previously required registration of fishing boats and processing operations in advance of seasonal activities, operators are now required to notify the Fish and Wildlife Service before moving to a new area or district. An accurate registration system will give the Service current knowledge of the amount of fishing gear in operation in each district, thus making possible effective management of fisheries. Local representatives of the Fish and Wildlife Service will serve as registration agents and are defined according to the towns at which they are stationed.

In conformance with the standardized winter troll closure recommended by the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission for the entire Pacific Coast, trolling for king salmon in the outside waters of Alaska is prohibited from November 1 to March 15, and for coho salmon from October 31 to June 15. The fall trolling closure in inside waters has now been shortened to extend only from September 20 to October 5 to conform to the special seining season which opens in several places in Southeastern Alaska on October 5. The prohibition against the taking of undersized king salmon, which formerly applied only to trolling, is now extended to all forms of gear. Identifying names and numbers on fishing boats and net floats must consist of lines at least one inch wide so that they may be readily distinguished.

Three general regulations pertaining to fish traps have been entirely deleted: one prescribing the rights of natives to trap site privileges on land set aside for their special occupancy, another requiring the filing of trap site locations with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and a third specifying methods of determining priorities of applicants for the same trap site. Further, a trap is now defined specifically so that any net or other device which is set or operated in the manner of a trap shall be subject to all the regulations pertaining to traps.

### Bering Sea

The use of motors in gill net fishing boats is no longer prohibited in the Kotzebue-Yukon-Kuskokwim area. The minimum legal size of king crab is increased from 5-1/2 to 6-1/2 inches in width of shell.

### Bristol Bay Area

The regulation pertaining to the Hagemeister regulatory district has been deleted inasmuch as no commercial fishery has existed in that section for many years. Methods of marking and registering fishing boats have been amended to require that the numbers and letters be at least 12 inches in height and that each boat be lettered to indicate the district in which it operates. Boats must not only be registered prior to the fishing season with the Fish and Wildlife Service but must also reregister in advance of moving to another district. To counteract the growing tendency to operate set nets far offshore on shallow beaches, it is now illegal to set any net at a distance greater than 150 yards from the mean high tide mark.

Regulations for 1950 are based on the premise that no more than the recommended maximum of 426 drift gill net boats will be operated in the entire Bristol Bay area.

### Alaska Peninsula Area

No change is made in the fishing season from the dates of last year; except for Port Moller, fishing will end throughout the district on August 5 unless escapements are so good as to warrant local extensions. Motive power is no longer prohibited in the gill net boats of the Chignik Area. Thin Point Cove has been closed to commercial fishing to protect its runs of red salmon. Canoe Bay is closed to king crab fishing because it is recognized as a spawning and nursery ground for that species.

### Kodiak Area

A closed season is established from July 15 to 31 generally throughout the Kodiak Area in order to protect the runs of pink salmon, which have been showing a distinctly downward trend in recent years. Exceptions to the closure will apply only to certain predominantly red salmon localities where the catch of that species is controlled by weir counts and where the abundance of pink salmon is not an important factor. Katagnak Bay and Sukhoi Lagoon are closed to commercial salmon fishing.

### Cook Inlet Area

No change is made in the seasonal dates normally governing even-year operations and the weekly closed period will remain the same as last year. However, the tremendous increase in amount of fishing gear which has come into the Inlet during the last two years is causing grave concern for the conservation of the salmon runs. A complete analysis of the situation is now being made for the purpose of determining the amount of closed time which should be applied to fishing each week to compensate for any further increase in total amount of gear during 1950. Compensatory weekly closing restrictions will be imposed if there is any increase in intensity of fishing over that of 1949. Nets must now be marked with letters at least 6 inches high instead of the 4 inches previously required. Drift, as well as fixed, gear must never be operated less than 600 feet from any other gear.

## Resurrection Bay Area

Catches of red salmon in this locality have dwindled to such an extent that the species is being accorded almost complete protection from commercial capture by keeping the season closed until the first of July, one full month later than in previous years.

## Prince William Sound and Copper River Areas

The closing date for red salmon fishing on Copper River is changed to June 20, 5 days later than last season. Port Chalmers on Montague Island is closed to all salmon fishing. Catches of set nets in the Eshamy section must be reported daily to the Fish and Wildlife Service after the general trap and seine season closes August 7 on Prince William Sound. This special reporting procedure is intended to prevent use of this locality's special late season as a loophole for declaring catches taken illegally elsewhere. In order to make the annual quota of razor clams more completely available to industry, the fall sub-quota is reduced from 3,000 to 1,000 cases and the difference is added to the spring sub-quota. The closed season on crab fishing in the waters of Orca Inlet, near Cordova, is extended to October 31 to prevent fishing during a period of low quality.

## Yakutat Area

Yakutat no longer constitutes a District in the Southeastern Alaska Area, but is now a distinct Area by itself. The regulations are completely revised to reflect its new status and to provide more realistic and effective management of the salmon runs under present conditions. Because of the serious shortage of red and king salmon in the major streams, due in large part to over-fishing, the season opening has been delayed approximately two weeks to increase early escapement. Although Dry Bay will open on June 1, the rest of the area will remain closed until July 1. Numerous minor adjustments are made in the regulations specifically affecting this fishery; these include reopening of Ankau Inlet to fishing, increasing the maximum allowable length of set nets in Yakutat Bay to 75 fathoms, and increasing the size of the closed area at the mouth of the Situk River.

## Southeastern Alaska Area

The opening date for all trap and seine fishing will be August 15. This is the same date on which fishing began last year, and it is hoped that similarly beneficial results will accrue to pink salmon escapements. The Fish and Wildlife Service will keep a close watch on the various districts prior to August 15, and earlier local openings will be permitted if supplies of salmon surplus to spawning needs are available without jeopardy to less favored runs.

Consistent with the policy of permitting gill netting in all localities susceptible to legitimate exploitation by this form of gear, the Port Snettisham region and the Stikine District have been enlarged to provide larger fields of operation. Likewise, Burroughs Bay, at the mouth of the Unuk River, is declared open to gill netting during the seining season in the Southern district. A considerable increase in the number of gill netters fishing the Port Snettisham region has made it necessary to reduce the maximum length of nets to 150 fathoms, the same limit that applies in nearby Taku Inlet.

Beach seining, which is permitted only in Wrangell Narrows, is more rigidly described in order to prevent confusion with gill netting operations. No change has been made in the provisions affecting the special fall seining areas, except that reporting of catches to the Fish and Wildlife Service has been liberalized to a daily instead of an immediate requirement. Although the current amendments to the regulations affecting the Southeastern Alaska area are quite numerous, most of them are for purposes of simplification and clarity only and little or no change in substance or meaning is involved.

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